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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: ARA WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

1. SUMMARY: SEVENTY-SIX CONGRESSMEN WROTE THE PRESIDENT WARNING OF COMMUNISM IN MEXICO. ECUADOREAN DETENTION OF US PRELATES MAY HALT CONGRESSIONAL MANUEVERS TO REMOVE THE OPEC GSP EXCLUSION. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT RUMORS THAT THE PERUVIANS MAY STILL INTEND TO BUY SOVIET AIRCRAFT. THE WAXING OF ARGENTINE VIOLENCE AND INDIFFERENCE TO HUMAN RIGHTS DRAWS DOMESTIC CRITICISM. THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE REPUBLICAN PLATFORM PLANK OR TORRIJOS' LATEST AWFUL STATEMENT, AT THE NA; SUMMIT. ARA TRAVEL FUNDS ARE TIGHT.

2. CONGRESSIONAL LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT WARNING OF COMMUNISM IN MEXICO -- A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT SIGNED BY 76 CONGRESSMEN EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER THE SPREAD OF COMMUNISM IN MEXICO APPEARED IN THE "WASHINGTON POST", "NEW YORK

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TIMES", AND "WALL STREET JOURNAL" AND OTHER NEWSPAPERS AT

THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK. A LETTER WITH SIMILAR CHARGES APPEARED IN THE "POST" IN MAY SIGNED BY 30 CONGRESSMEN. AS BILL LUERS SUGGESTED IN HIS JUNE CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY, WE BELIEVE THE CHARGES ARE NOT SUBSTANTIATED.

3. ECUADOR'S DETENTION OF US PRELATES AND THE GSP EX-

CLUSION -- ECUADOR'S DETENTION OF FIVE US CATHOLIC LEADERS AUGUST 12-13 MAY AFFECT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON LIFTING THE EXCLUSION OF ECUADOR AND VENEZUELA FROM GSP. ECUADOR-EAN AUTHORITIES BROKE UP A BISHOPS' CONFERENCE, DETAINED THE PARTICIPANTS, AND ASKED THEM TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY UPON RELEASE. ONE OF THE US BISHOPS DETAINED WAS A CONSTITUENT OF SENATOR LLOYD BENTSEN OF TEXAS, THE SPONSOR OF THE AMENDMENT TO REMOVE THE EXCLUSION.

4. PERUVIAN PLANS TO BUY 36 SOVIET FIGHTER BOMBERS -- WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN THAT A FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN BY THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT CONCERNING THE PURCHASE OF 36 ADVANCED FIGHTER-BOMBERS FROM THE USSR, ALTHOUGH WE NOTE THAT PERUVIAN AIR FORCE OFFICERS HAVE FLOWN TO MOSCOW IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEAL. US BANKS UNDERWRITING PERU'S LOANS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF THE REPORTED 250 MILLION DOLLAR PURCHASE ON PERU'S BALANCE OF PAYMENTS. WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINA -- US CITIZEN FATHER JAMES WEEKS, ARRESTED BY ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES ON AUGUST 3 WAS RELEASED AUGUST 17 AND HAS ARRIVED BACK IN THE US. THIS INCIDENT AND CONTINUING DRAMATIC REPORTS IN THE MEDIA HERE OF MASS MURDERS, ARRESTS AND DISAPPEARANCES ARE RAPIDLY CONVERTING ARGENTINA INTO A SECOND CHILE AMONG CONCERNED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS.

6. PANAMA CANAL -- (A) REPUBLICAN PLATFORM PLANK. CONTRARY TO EXPECTATIONS, THE ANTICIPATED FLOOR FIGHT AT THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION OVER THE COMPROMISE PANAMA PLANK ADOPTED BY THE PLATFORM COMMITTEE DID NOT MATERIALIZE. THE LANGUAGE ADOPTED BY THE PLATFORM COMMITTEE THAT THE US "IN NO WAY WILL YIELD ANY RIGHTS OF JURISDICTION NEEDED
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TO PROTECT ITSELF OR THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE" IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH ONGOING TREATY NEGOTIATIONS EFFORTS.

(B) TORRIJOS AT COLOMBO. ON TUESDAY, TORRIJOS, MADE AN EMOTIONAL SPEECH TO THE SUMMIT MEETING OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. SOME PASSAGES WERE QUITE DISTURBING IN RHETORIC. TO USE BILL JORDEN'S WORDS, THE RHETORIC "BURNS BUT LEAVES NO SCARS". THE TONE OF THE NAM RESOLUTION, PLEDGING THE

NAM'S SUPPORT FOR PANAMA'S "FAIR ASPIRATIONS", WAS RATHER MILD FOR A PANAMANIAN EFFORT. WHILE WE DID NOT LIKE THE SPEECH OR THE RESOLUTION, WE FEEL THAT GENERAL TORRIJOS HEEDED OUR ADVICE TO KEEP THE TONE OF THE CANAL DISCUSSION WITHIN LOOSELY DEFINED LIMITS AT COLOMBO.

7. ARA TRAVEL -- OUR GOAL CONTINUES TO BE EXPANDED USE OF RESOURCES FOR TRAVEL TO LATIN AMERICAN OF BUREAU OFFICERS

AND VISITS TO WASHINGTON BY SENIOR EMBASSY OFFICERS. AT THIS TIME, HOWEVER, BUDGETARY RESTRICTIONS LIMIT "SENIOR EMBASSY OFFICIALS" TO COM'S ONLY FROM THE FIELD.

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